WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for managing a geographical distribution of business representatives, the method comprising:

receiving a trace defining a closed geographical area;

identifying at least one geographical unit within the closed geographical area; and

modifying a stored characteristic of the geographical unit in response to an instruction from a user.

2.   The method recited in claim 1 wherein modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

3.   The method recited in claim 2 wherein assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit comprises substituting the business representative for a prior business representative.

4.   The method recited in claim 1 wherein receiving a trace defining a closed geographical area comprises receiving a freehand trace.

5 .   The method recited in claim 4 wherein the freehand trace is provided with a pen and digitizing tablet.

6.   The method recited in claim 4 wherein the freehand trace is provided with a touch screen.

7.   The method recited in claim 1 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

8.   The method recited in claim 1 wherein the at least one geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

9.   The method recited in claim 8 wherein modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises removing the at least one geographical unit from the established set of geographical units.

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1 10. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising updating an
2 assignment of business representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in
3 the established set of geographical units.

1 11. The method recited in claim 1 wherein modifying the stored
2 characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises adding the at least one
3 geographical unit to an established set of geographical units.

1 12. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying an
2 assignment of a plurality of business representatives to a plurality of geographical units
3 graphically.

1 13. A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable
2 program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system including an input
3 device, a display device, a processor, and a storage device, wherein the computer-readable
4 program includes instructions for operating the computer system to manage a geographical
5 distribution of business representatives in accordance with the following:
6   receiving a trace from the input device defining a closed geographical area;
7   identifying at least one geographical unit within the closed geographical area
8 with the processor; and
9   modifying a stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit on the
10 storage device in response to an instruction from a user.

1 14. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein
2 modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprises assigning a
3 business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

1 15. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein
2 the at least one geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

1 16. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein
2 the at least one geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

1 17. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16 wherein
2 the computer-readable program further includes instructions for updating an assignment of

3   business representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in the established

4   set of geographical units.

1   18.   The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein

2   the computer-readable program further includes instructions for displaying an assignment of

3   a plurality of business representatives to a plurality of geographical units graphically on the

4   display device.

1   19.   A computer system comprising:

2   an input device;

3   a storage device;

4   a processor in communication with the input device and the storage device;

5   and

6   a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-

7   readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for

8   operating the computer system to manage a geographical distribution of business

9   representatives, the computer-readable program including:

10   instructions for receiving a trace from the input device defining a

11   closed geographical area;

12   instructions for identifying at least one geographical unit within the

13   closed geographical area with the processor; and

14   instructions for modifying a stored characteristic of the at least one

15   geographical unit on the storage device in response to an instruction from a user.

1   20.   The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the instructions for

2   modifying the stored characteristic of the at least one geographical unit comprise instructions

3   for assigning a business representative to the at least one geographical unit.

1   21.   The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the at least one

2   geographical unit is comprised by a hierarchy of geographical units.

1   22.   The computer system recited in claim 19 wherein the at least one

2   geographical unit is comprised by an established set of geographical units.

1   23.   The computer system recited in claim 22 wherein the computer-

2   readable program further includes instructions for updating an assignment of business

3   representatives to geographical units in accordance with a change in the established set of

4   geographical units.

1   24.   The computer system recited in claim 19 further comprising a display

2   device in communication with the processor, wherein the computer-readable program further

3   includes instructions for displaying an assignment of a plurality of business representatives to

4   a plurality of geographical units graphically on the display device.